

DLC Finds Abuse at Evergreen Center in Milford

BOSTON, April 7, 2016 – The Disability Law Center (DLC) issues a Report today finding abuse and neglect by staff at the Evergreen Center in Milford, Massachusetts. Evergreen Center is a residential school for children with disabilities, ages 6 - 22.

In response to a complaint received November 5, 2015, DLC began an investigation concerning injuries to a student that were discovered on November 1, 2015. The investigation involved interviews of fourteen staff, as well as one former staff member, examination of extensive records and pictures of the injuries, and a site visit to the residence where the abuse occurred.

In its Report issued today, DLC found that ‘PK’ was subjected to substantial blunt force to the head and face by a staff person, sufficient to cause a ruptured ear drum and large bruise to the face. This constitutes ‘abuse’ under the protection and advocacy regulations.

The Report additionally found that staff failed to report these injuries to the Department of Children and Families immediately, despite having reasonable cause on November 1, 2015 to believe that these injuries were the result of abuse and neglect. The Report also found that the school’s failure to “identify, track, analyze and respond to the series of bruises that PK had leading up to the October 31st incident is neglect” under those same regulations.

“The injuries inflicted on this student are particularly upsetting.” says Christine Griffin, DLC’s Executive Director, “This young man was hurt by the very people who are supposed to protect him and keep him safe.”

Evergreen terminated the employment of the staff member who allegedly abused the student and the school has undertaken a series of actions to avoid recurrence of the abuse, including improving training and supervision. However, DLC seeks further improvements at the Evergreen Center to ensure that the problems identified from this incident are addressed, including improving its reporting policies and practices, and improving its policies and practices concerning bruises and skin checks.

DLC is also seeking that the school provide DLC with an update on its remedial actions within 90 days.

DLC, as the designated Protection and Advocacy System for Massachusetts, is authorized under federal law to investigate incidents of abuse and neglect of individuals with disabilities.

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